



PRAMA – REAL KNOWLEDGE – IN DIFFERENT SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT : Among the Indian Darśanas, except Carvakas, almost all others are seen accepting the need for valid knowledge to attain emancipation. Among these, the Purva Uttara Mimamsakas and the Nyaya-Vaisesikas are more tended to this belief. But they could not arrive at a common conclusion regarding real knowledge since there were several other factors to force them to formulate an idea or definition so as to keep their earlier conception not affected. In this article, the views of different schools regarding Prama (real knowledge) are tried to be brought out. The defects occurring while attempting to furnish a new definition are also put in.

Key Words: *Darsana, Carvakas, Mimamsakas, Ativyapti, Avyapti, Smrti, Anuvada, Prama, Pramana.*

INTRODUCTION:

In a varied discrepancy that always puzzles the seekers of knowledge while going through the path of schools including both theistic and atheistic is under what circumstances the knowledge itself became the object of interest in ancient studies. Knowledge regarding several objects that man deals with makes him a scholar in the concerned field. When most of the schools followed this way, certain schools that propagated *Vedanta* especially *Advaita* turned to acquire the knowledge of “knowledge” itself which they believed to be the only remedy for all cosmic problems. Following this, the other schools also seem to have engaged in discussions, though in a limited way, to judge the reality behind the knowledge emerging from time to time. In this article, it is tried to judge the validity of the result arrived at through such enquires which would shed light on the salient features of these schools of knowledge.

PRAMA – REAL KNOWLEDGE

Difference of opinion is widely seen in the assumptions held by scholars of different systems. *Bhatta Mimamsakas*, similar to *Naiyayikas*, like to define *Pramana* (source of knowledge) as *pramitikarana*, the instrument of real knowledge. But for *Prama* they favour a definition as *Ajnata tattvartha jnana* which meant a knowledge that is real indicating a sense so far not known.

By *Prama*, the *Naiyayikas* simply mean a real knowledge. When the real knowledge as said by *Mimamsakas* is concerned with something unknown, the *Smrti* (remembrance) and *Anuvada* (repetition) which do not possess a new knowledge would not be mentioned by the said distinguishing factor.

The *Naiyayikas* want to include *Anuvada* (repetition) in real – knowledge. That is why they defined *Prama* only as a real knowledge but the *Bhatta Mimamsakas* find *Anuvada* as merely a repetition of the said thing and hence they find no irregularity in excluding it from the circle of real – knowledge.

In the knowledge obtained from the continuous usage – *dharavahika* – like *ghatoyam* (this is pot), *ghatoyam* (this is pot) the *Mimamsakas* find no unreality as in *Anuvada* since according to them the secondary knowledge of *ghata* is detached from the previous one, though similar, by the *kalamsa* (part of time) that is new. In the continuation, the forthcoming seconds, differing from the earlier ones, provide a new face for each word, pronounced.

Here a doubt is raised as how the part of time can be realised since time is one pertained to attribute. In reply, the *Bhattas* say that the *Prakatyā* (manifestation) of the knowledge of the first uttered word, *ghata* will exist till the production of the knowledge from the utterance of the second one and by this manifestation the part of time will come to realisation.

The second group of *Mimamsakas*, viz. *Prabhakarās* are of the opinion that there is no knowledge to be distinguished as unreal. Citing an example “*idam rajatam*” (this is silver), the knowledge rised by mistake on looking at *sukti* (shell), the *Prabhakarās* argue that the seer gets the knowledge of shell obtained by the seer is real. As far as he is concerned, the knowledge of silver he gets in shell is real. Thus the *Prabhakara Mimamsakas* deny the emergence of any unreal knowledge.

The *Bhatta Mimamsakas*, on the other hand, refute their argument by telling that a knowledge becomes real only when the object seen and sought is the same. While seeing a shell as silver, one is enriched with the knowledge of *idam* – this – also. Even the knowledge of silver will not rise unless he first obtains the knowledge of the object lying before him. When the seen

object is not really silver, the obtained knowledge of silver will remain unreal alone. Based on this, the *Bhatta Mimamsakas*, say that there exists unreal – knowledge also.

Thus *Prama*, the real-knowledge, is defined by the *Bhattas*, as the knowledge that is real indicating a sense so far unknown. Since such knowledge is derived by the contact of sensual organs, they will also be known as *Pramanas* – the means of real knowledge.

Prakatya (manifestation), produced by *Prama* (knowledge) also will be indicated as a secondary meaning by the word, *Prama*. Thus in this school of *Bhatta Mimamsakas*, *Prama*, being the cause of *Prakatya*, just another form of *Prama* itself, will gain the state of *Pramana* (the means of valid knowledge) also. Hence the *Bhattas* are called *Phalapravanadins* – those who find the causation lying in effect.

The *Naiyayikas* define *Pramana* (the mean of real-knowledge) as *Pramakarana* – an instrument to real-knowledge. *Prama* the real –knowledge is described as the real experience. Here they explain experience as knowledge different from *smrti* (remembrance).

The *Bhatta Mimamsakas* who find *Anuvada* (repetition) not a real-knowledge deny this definition of the *Naiyayikas* since it cannot exclude *Anuvada* from its circle. So they find the definition given to *Prama* (real-knowledge) by the *Naiyayikas* defective owing to the defect called *Ativyapti* (unwarranted extent).

Prabhakara-Mimamsakas define *Prama* (real-knowledge) as a knowledge purely in the form of experience, different from *smrti* (remembrance). By this definition they cannot exclude *Bhrama* (misapprehension) which is also different from *Smrti* (remembrance). Hence the *Bhatta Mimamsakas* find this definition defective owing to the defect called *Ativyapti* (unwarranted extent).

Prabhakara-Mimamsakas believe that in any knowledge, there will be the flash of the Self, object and knowledge. At the same time they are not ready to count *Smrti* (remembrance) as a form of knowledge. The *Bhatta Mimamsakas* indicate this contradictory by saying that by avoiding *Smrti* (remembrance) from the field of real-knowledge, the self, etc. which possess a place in *Smrti* (remembrance) also will be out of place which would be against to their earlier claim. It will cause the defect, *Avyapti* (inadequate extent).

The *Bauddhas* want to define *Prama* (the valid knowledge) as the knowledge that is not deceptive - *Avisamvadi Vijnanam*. It is explained, in other words, as *Arthakriyakaritva*, the ability in producing useful things. *Bhattas* find fault with this definition since it cannot include *Anumana* (inference) when it is related with the things of past and future for lack of visible evidence to prove the emerging of useful things at these periods.

The *Advaita* school of Vedanta finds the knowledge of the Self – *Atma* alone as real since for them, the common knowledge, risen through the contact of sensual organs is not real. They find the outer world not true. The knowledge of the Self is to be attained through practice. The knowledge of the world is born since the mind is covered with *Ajnana* (unreal knowledge).

Ramanuja refuted this theory of Advaita by showing the thought risen in mind as ‘I know not me’. This thought which is common to all will become unreal on accepting the theory of *Advaitins* who believe the knowledge of the Self alone is true. In the said through there is the flash of Self, the awareness of the lack of knowledge etc. which will not rise if the mind is covered by *Ajnana* (unreal knowledge) as the *Advaitins* say.

According to Ramanuja’s *Visista Advaita*, there is no solid *Ajnana* covering the thinking mind. An unknown thing can be made known by the studies as well the knowledge of the Self also is not beyond reach

CONCLUSION:

From the above analysis and discussion it can be concluded that seeking knowledge was considered the major aim of most of the schools of thought. Except *Carvakas*, all the others seek the path of knowledge by following their own way. *Pramanas*, the means of knowledge, attains importance due to its being an aid for valid knowledge – *Pramakaranam Pramanam*. Though the accepted *Pramanas* are eight in number, each school of thought can be seen choosing some among them. It is because the theories held by them required mutually incompatible logical frameworks to describe reality.

The knowledge obtained can be seen made submissive to re-examination though the results at times vary owing to the difference of opinions borne by schools. Knowledge beyond the reach of sensual organs also plays a vital role in the stages of ancient seers.

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